

# INTERNATIONAL NEWSLETTER

**ASUC Berkeley**

**Volume 1, Number 1**

**May, 1990**

## **CENTRAL AMERICA UPDATE**

### **Nicaragua**

Many people in the US have forgotten that Nicaragua held its first internationally observed elections in 1984, leading to a multi-party National Assembly in which the FSLN held 61 out of 96 seats. For the last two years the opposition to the FSLN, both to the left and to the right, have formed a fragile coalition to overcome the divisiveness which weakened them in the 1984 elections. Splits within the UNO (United Nicaraguan Opposition) coalition were temporarily mended under the unifying effect of then Presidential candidate Violeta Chamorro.

*(Continued on page 6.)*

## **SOUTHERN AFRICA UPDATE**

While the release of Nelson Mandela and the unbanning of the ANC and other opposition groups in South Africa absorbed the attention of the mass media for a while, other events - such as the recent concert in London to honor Mandela, the continued violence in South Africa, and events in other Southern African countries - receive almost no US media coverage.

*(Continued on page 2.)*

## **SOUTHEAST ASIA HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

Vietnam, once a country that preoccupied the US public, rarely finds its way into the US media nowadays. Developments in Vietnam since the fall of Saigon in 1975, however, have had a significant impact in international affairs. The Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV - North Vietnam) found itself at the center of the socialist world in the 1960's when it held diplomatic relations with both China and the USSR during the Sino-Soviet split. Its ability to balance the two socialist powers against each other gave the DRV the leverage to develop its own policies.

*(Continued on page 3.)*

## **SOUTHERN AFRICA** *(Continued from page 1.)*

### **Inkatha versus the ANC/UDF**

For five years, there has been ethnic violence within the Black population in the province of Natal. The Inkatha movement - headed by its president Gatsha Buthelezi who is also the minister of the local Kwazulu Police, has been in armed conflict with the ANC and the UDF (United Democratic Front). In the last few weeks alone Inkatha members, armed with R-1 and R-4 rifles, have been involved in joint attacks with the Kwazulu Police and the South African Police against ANC/UDF supporters, killing at least 79 people. Many ANC/UDF supporters, who currently have only machetes and clubs, are demanding that the ANC provide them with guns. So far the ANC has refused, stating that "the struggle we are waging is also for their [Inkatha members'] freedom." So far negotiations between Inkatha and the ANC/UDF have been unsuccessful.

### **ANC and De Klerk**

Negotiations between the ANC and the South African government over the reconstruction of South Africa have just begun. While both sides agree that "united efforts" are needed and that apartheid must end, De Klerk has said that majority rule is not "suitable to South Africa because it will lead to the suppression of minorities." He supports "power sharing" based on two principles: equal vote for all and protection of minorities and their property. Winnie Mandela has noted that such a position will continue to define South Africa along racial divisions, not equal rights. The ANC has announced that it will cease hostilities if the government shows good faith during negotiations, but it will not discuss ANC disarmament until the elimination of apartheid is irreversible.

### **Elections in Namibia and Zimbabwe**

The recent elections in Namibia has created the first Black majority government since the beginning of Portuguese colonial domination over what was once Rhodesia and is today Namibia. In April, Namibia was welcomed into the United Nations.

Elections in March seem to have brought some stability to Zimbabwe. After six years of conflict between ZANU (Zimbabwe African National Union, dominated by Shona people and led by President Robert Mugabe) and ZAPU (Zimbabwe African People's Union, dominated by Matabeleland peoples and led by Joshua Nkomo), an agreement was reached in 1987 called the ZANU-ZAPU unity pact, which included amnesty for the guerrillas. This has led to a political alliance which swept the elections over the opposition. Favorable election results don't mean everyone is satisfied with Mugabe's ZANU. Morgan Tsvangirayi, Secretary General of ZCTU (Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions), accuses the ZANU leadership of protecting their own status,

*(Continued on next page.)*



misprioritizing spending, and manipulating the working class to strengthen their party. Zimbabwe is adopting IMF austerity measures which include a ban on strikes. (Based on TecNICA electronic mail.)

## **VIETNAM** (Continued from page 1.)

Land reform, which was complete in the DRV by 1957, was extensive in the National Liberation Front (NLF - the South Vietnamese resistance army) controlled regions of South Vietnam by 1965. The DRV embarked on a massive collectivization campaign throughout the 1960's to generate agricultural surplus for export. The DRV would use foreign earnings for industrial investment and was able to give the cooperatives farming inputs in exchange for agricultural surplus. However, there was little incentive for individual peasant households to produce surplus at low state prices. There was widespread peasant non-cooperation leading to a food crisis in 1979 which forced the new Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV - after reunification) to introduce liberalization reforms and encouragement of small-scale production and trade. This set a precedent of Communist policy reversal which later impacted the Communist Parties in China and the USSR.

The experience of guerrilla warfare in Vietnam has benefited guerrilla movements in other regions of the world as well as the US military which has learned to use more sophisticated tactics today such as proxy armies and disinformation campaigns. Unfortunately, the 25 million bomb craters (compacted soil) and years of defoliant and herbicide spraying have left serious environmental impacts: denuded hills, top soil erosion, a drop in the water table (deforestation disrupts the hydrologic cycle), and increased fluctuations in river flow leading to increased flooding. In 1985, the SRV drafted the *National Conservation Strategy*, and new Environmental Studies program exists at Hanoi University, indicating a long-awaited government response to the loss of Vietnam's natural resources.

At the end of the 1970's, Vietnam invaded Cambodia to take power from the China-backed Khmer Rouge, under Pol Pot, which had been attacking Vietnamese villages. China retaliated by invading Vietnam, which forced SRV to side with the USSR. Today, Vietnam's military presence in Cambodia is declining and the government under Prime Minister Hun Sen, a former officer in the Khmer Rouge, has led to stabilization and a decrease of violence in Cambodia. While the capital of Phnom Penh has revived from years of war and atrocities, both poverty and violence increase as one moves away from the capital city. US policy toward Cambodia has been confused, on the one hand condemning the Hun Sen government for its former ties with the Khmer Rouge, while on the other hand recognizing the Khmer Rouge's claim to Cambodia's UN seat to help normalize its relations with China.

## "I'll Die Gladly" (Poetry from El Salvador)

they're going to kill me  
when?  
I don't know...  
what I do know clearly is that I'll die  
that way, assassinated by the enemy

since I long to go on fighting  
I'll always keep fighting to die that way

since I want to die with the people  
I'll never be separated from them.  
since it's our shout that reaches out  
I have to keep shouting forever.

since the future and history  
are with us,  
I'll never stray from the road.

since I aspire to be a revolutionary  
my viewpoints  
and all my hopes  
depart from that.

I'll never be afraid.  
everything I do  
must be a blow against the enemy,  
however I give it.

I'll always be active

what is really certain

is that they're going to kill me.

and my blood will water our land  
and the flowers of freedom will grow

and the future will open its arms  
and tenderly, filled with love,

our mother, our fatherland,  
will press us to its breast  
will laugh happily to be once more with its child,  
with its people





with the child that yesterday wept for a crust of bread  
and who today  
grows like a river.

with the mother who died slowly  
and today lives her far-off dream of yesterday.

with the eternal combatant  
whose blood  
nourished the day  
that some day will arrive.

yes, I'll die happily, filled with love,  
I want to die in the most natural way in these times  
and in my country:  
assassinated by the enemy of my people.

-Delfy Gochez Fernandez  
(Santa Tecla, May 10, 1979: On the Front  
Line, Guerrilla Poems of El Salvador)

### **McNamara** *(Continued from back page.)*

A student expressed his disillusionment with the CIA, and asked what reform policies this institution should undergo in dealing with developing countries. McNamara first stated that there was an important need for the CIA and covert operations. He added that polls indicate the majority of US citizens support covert operations. McNamara then stressed that there is a need for such an institution to implement covert policies to deal with the "Evil Empire," because their policies are a threat.

This statement revealed the contradiction of the past president of the World Bank. Posing as wolf in sheep's clothing, he made it clear that he still echoes the line of American Foreign policy makers who view communist nations as a threat to capitalist ideologies. By referring to the Soviet Block as the "Evil Empire," and indicating the need to preserve the CIA, an institution known for disrupting and overthrowing governments in the Third World, he shows that in fact he is not a "threat" to the American establishment; he is a preserver.

Moreover, McNamara's shifting the World Bank's policy from aiding Western Nations to aiding Third World Nations was inevitable. When he took office in 1968, Western nations had already established the foundations necessary to become future economic and political powers, giving aid to these countries was no longer pressing. But the World Bank needed to lend money to someone, neoclassical theory proves that this is how banks make money.

*(Continued on page 6.)*

## **McNamara** *(Continued from page 5.)*

It so happens that those who needed money at the time were Third World Nations; anyone heading the Bank at that time would have changed its policies.

Finally, Reagan's decision to have McNamara resign because his policies "misused" tax payers money on "so-called social programs" indicates that the US somehow wanted to spend American tax payers' money more wisely. How could the Reagan administration justify this stance, when during this same year the US began stepping up monetary aid to the Contras at war with the Sandinistas in Nicaragua? Evidently, the Reagan administration saw no need to continue housing and medical projects in developing regions, but saw a need to spend millions of dollars to kill people in Nicaragua. It is clear that there are many contradictions underlying US foreign policy. The question is, does the government and its administration think we can be fooled by their foreign policies?

## **Nicaragua** *(Continued from page 1.)*

This year, for the first time in Nicaragua's history, the peaceful transfer of power occurred this year. The FSLN, having been formed to create a democratic Nicaragua free from imperial domination, can say to have sacrificed a tactical loss for a historically and morally more significant strategic victory. The social transformation and creation of a constitutional and participatory democracy are remarkable achievements for the decade-old revolution which began with a decapitalized and militarily threatened nation. Gains in civil liberties, land reforms, education, and health care are widespread. In San Juan de Limay, for example, land that supported 10,000 people used to be owned by only 6 people. Somoza himself owned one-tenth of the cultivatable land. Land has been transferred to agricultural cooperatives and individual farmers. Illiteracy has been reduced from 52% to 12% and health care is free.

Recently the right-wing faction of UNO, headed by Vice President Virgilio Godoy, has split with Chamorro's faction over the issue of allowing Humberto Ortega remain in charge of the armed forces. This concession to the FSLN by Chamorro has led to a feeling of reconciliation. The Contras, who never would have lasted the decade without US support, have refused to disarm. If the US wants to retain any dignity at all concerning our claim to be encouraging democracy in Central America, it must actively involve itself in calling for Contra demobilization and direct all funding through the UN and OAS (Organization of American States).

*(Central America Update continued on next page.)*



## Guatemala

Since the CIA-supported overthrow of the democratically elected government in 1954, Guatemala has been ruled by a series of military dictatorships. Opposition guerrilla groups were formed in the following years, peaking in 1968. At this time the government and Army began a violent, and at times genocidal attempt to rid the country of "subversives". The people call the period of 1978 to 1983 "The Great Repression", due to the widespread, random human rights abuses committed against the civilian population by the Guatemalan Army. The most violent time was in 1982-1983, when 100,000 to 300,000 people were killed in the countryside in less than a year. Tortures, kidnappings, and disappearances were rampant during this period of rule by President Efraín Ríos Montt. 1.5 million people were displaced from their homelands between 1981 to 1984 by the violent oppression, while a documented 40,000 refugees have fled to México and an estimated 250,000 are believed to have done the same. The "war against the guerrilla", an excuse for the real war being waged against the common people of the countryside, has produced 47,000 widows, each of whom must support 3 to 5 children, alone.

Rosalina, a widow elected the general coordinator of the National Coordination of Widows, told us her story: "The situation got worse and worse for us women, alone. We had to get busy working the land and countryside in order to feed our children. Being women, we were expected to stay at home and not go out and organize, and since we did go out, we are considered a threat because we want to participate alongside the men. We give workshops on the rights of women and our roles in Guatemalan culture. The problems never end, the pain continues ... I keep going because I don't want to see any more widows in Guatemala. I do this job because I look at my children and wonder what their future will be if I don't do this job."

Instead of working in the fields, young men feel forced to serve in the "voluntary," non-paying Civil Defense Patrols, which are patrols of campesinos in the countryside or isolated mountain areas. In addition, illiteracy is high in Guatemala, because the children and adults do not have the time to go to school. Instead they must work in the fields to scratch out a living to put food on their tables. There is one public university which requires virtually no tuition fees, yet only 1% of the population attends. The federal government allocates only 5% of its budget to higher education.

The Guatemalan government claims it is a democracy when President Cerezo was elected by only 29% of the people. The US strongly supports Guatemala's "democracy". US officials acknowledge the presence of US troops in Guatemala but claim that they are only centralized at the US Embassy or places which need medical help. However, it has been the experience of the churches that US troops have joined with the Guatemalan Army in some places.



## McNamara: World Bank and US Foreign Policy

Robert McNamara, past president of World Bank visited UC Berkeley last month on April 17 and spoke at the International House. McNamara, a UC Berkeley Alumni, was responsible for changing many policies in the Bank from focusing on developmental projects in Japan and Western nations devastated by World War II to Third World nations. His policies were the reasons why many Third World countries were able to secure aid from the bank for development projects. However, in 1981 McNamara was forced to resign because of the new US administration under Ronald Reagan. Arguing that US tax payers should not be required to pay for the "little experiments in so-called social projects" within developing countries, Reagan's administration deemphasized the role of America in the Bank (World Bank, Housing Sector Policy Paper, 1978, p.14)

McNamara began his speech by indicating it was no secret that he was considered a threat to the new administration because they viewed him as a communist sympathizer. He even joked that the Washington Post had blazoned him as being a "communist" and this did not daunt him. He showed no fear in believing the US should be committed to social programs which aid in the development of peoples, not only internationally, but domestically as well. He stressed the importance for the US to solve its own housing, education, and drug problems. He stated that our fear for Cuba and the Soviet Union were based on unsubstantiated paranoia. He feels that future policies can benefit once trust is established with these communist nations. In essence McNamara presented himself as a socially aware Berkeley alumni who cares about social welfare and emphasized the need for changes in present economic policies focused on the defense, to begin to focus on people. Throughout the lecture, it seemed as if McNamara was a leader committed to social change. But when the question and answer session began, his real ideologies were revealed.

*(Continued on page 5.)*

### Newsletter Information

This is our first newsletter. Our goal is to provide current and historical information about international affairs to the UC Berkeley campus. We want to print more of these next semester, but we need your help. Not money, just knowledge. If you or someone you know is researching on a particular country or region, please submit either a brief update or historical perspective on that country or region.

**Newsletter staff:** Cindy Wiesner, Victoria Fernández, Andres Marti, Bess Dolmo, Kirsty McKay, Shannon Schilling (contributor).

**ASUC International Affairs Office:** 214 Eshleman (642-4017)

**SAICA (Students Against Intervention in Central America):** 613 Eshleman  
Funded by ASUC Mini Grants